UTES GATHER AT WHITE-ROCKS FOR SUN DANCE

For days the Ute Indian has been gathering to participate in the one ancient religious ceremony left to them, the Sun dance, which started Tuesday at Whiterocks and closes tonight (Thursday).

Among the jungle like growth of trees and shrubbery where many small streams of clear mountain water flow from all directions, the site near Whiterocks seems ideal, and at once inspires a feeling of mystery. The corral has been built of new green boughs. Only pine trees may be used to mark off the stalls, the trunks painted bright colors. Each participant has a stall. His body is painted in fantastic marks and colorings. A beaded apron of elaborate design running from neck to knees is the usual dress; a colored eagle feather or two in the hair completes the costume. About thirty Indians dance. The weird chanting and drums seem continuous. Starting at his stall the dancer advances in step to the music. In his mouth is an eagle bone whistle which at each step adds to the music. His eyes are glued to a painted disk on a center pole and back and fourth the dancer continues, nor must he lag, for the master of ceremonies carries a buggy whip and uses it. For three days and nights the dance continues and neither food nor drink is allowed the participant. Many fall from exhaustion and are dragged to their stall, there to revive without aid as best they can. The Sun dance is the medicine dance of the Ute and many ills are cured thereby. One may dance for a relative or friend and many do.

A tribal feast on the third day completes the ceremony which by the way is fast losing its ancient meaning and significance through education of the younger generation with the whites.

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